Heritage2031: Maryland's Statewide Preservation Plan

A note to readers:

This draft for public comment summarizes the statewide preservation planning process and the feedback received through public outreach efforts led by the Maryland Historical Trust over the course of 2023. It offers a draft vision as well as draft goals and objectives for historic preservation, archaeology, and cultural heritage for 2024-2031. If you participated in any of our meetings, surveys, focus groups, or other opportunities, we thank you!

Because this is a plan to guide everyone working in cultural heritage and related fields in Maryland, we are engaging with partners to finalize sample strategies for the goals and objectives listed. If you have actions planned that connect to these goals and objectives, please share them as part of your feedback! Strategies will be included in the final plan, to be released in early 2024.

In some cases, text in brackets indicates where additional information will be added to the final document, so you can see what is intended. Supplemental materials intended for the plan (Section 2) are listed in the draft table of contents but are not included for review.

We are presenting the draft in this format to make it as accessible as possible and – hopefully – make it easy to provide comments **by December 22, 2023**. If you have any difficulty accessing the document or using the comment functions, please let Brenna Spray, MHT's outreach coordinator, know and we will work with you to get you the information you need. Brenna can be reached at brenna.spray@maryland.gov.

Thank you again for your participation in the planning process to develop *Heritage2031*.

-- Nell Ziehl, Chief, Office of Planning, Education, and Outreach, MHT

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Section 1: Heritage2031

Introduction

The Statewide Preservation Plan

The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), a division of the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) is the state agency dedicated to preserving and interpreting the legacy of Maryland's past. Governed by a 15-member Board of Trustees, MHT offers an array of state and federal programs that support historic preservation, archaeology, and cultural heritage protection and interpretation. MHT has administrative headquarters in Crownsville and operates Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum (JPPM) in Calvert County, which in turn houses the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory (MAC Lab).

As Maryland's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), MHT is mandated to "prepare and implement a comprehensive statewide historic preservation plan," pursuant to Section 101(b)(3)(c) of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended. Regulations require a plan "that provides guidance for effective decision making about historic property preservation throughout the state." In this way, the plan serves the broader preservation community, not just MHT. In addition to historic preservation, which typically refers to architecture, the plan includes archaeology and cultural heritage more broadly.

In recent years, MHT has updated the statewide preservation plan at five-year intervals. However, in soliciting feedback for the last iteration of the statewide plan, it became clear that the goals identified remained relevant for a much longer period. For this reason, the last plan update was presented as a sequel to the previous one (*PreserveMaryland* and *PreserveMaryland II*, respectively) and retained the same goals. For the current planning process, MHT made the decision to extend the timeframe to eight years (2024-2031), with a midterm update in 2028. Rather than repeat the full public engagement of a typical planning cycle at the midterm, MHT will work with partner agencies and organizations to update the objectives and strategies within the goals identified in *Heritage2031* and reissue the plan.

Once the plan is completed, the National Park Service (NPS) reviews the final document to ensure that it:

- includes significant and meaningful public participation;
- · identifies significant issues affecting historic resources; and
- proposes realistic solutions and sets priorities for preservation action.

Prior to NPS approval, the final plan is reviewed by the Secretary of Planning and the Governor, and approved by the MHT Board of Trustees. Although the plan is intended to serve as a roadmap for the broader preservation community, and MHT encourages participation in the implementation, there is no mandate or requirement for individuals or organizations to adhere to the plan. MHT will use the plan to inform its agency's work over the next eight years and report annually to NPS on its progress.

Plan Process

Heritage 2031 is the result of collaborative work among many partners engaged in historic preservation, archaeology, and cultural heritage, including Preservation Maryland (PM), the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC), the Archeology Society of Maryland (ASM), the Council for Maryland Archeology, the Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions (MAHDC), the Coalition of Maryland Heritage Areas, the Maryland Museums Association (MMA), Maryland Humanities, the Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC), and the NPS – Chesapeake Bay Office. MHT Trustee Samuel J. Parker, Jr. served as the chair of the planning process. These partners gave feedback on planning strategies, helped develop questions for public input, advertised public meetings and surveys, co-hosted focus groups, facilitated discussions, and helped bring their constituents to the table. (For more information on the key agencies and organizations involved in the planning effort, see the directory in Appendix [X].)

It is important to note that MHT is not the only agency responsible for Maryland's historic and cultural properties. State agencies that participated in the planning process include the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), which oversees state parks and intersects with MHT's work on climate planning and adaptation; the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA), which operates the Maryland Scenic Byways program and the Historic Markers program and conducts archaeology throughout the state; the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), which houses the Maryland Main Street program and financial incentive programs including Community Legacy grants. which often support preservation and rehabilitation; and the Maryland Department of General Services (DGS), which maintains historic properties in state ownership. MHT staffs the inter-agency Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) and the African American Heritage Preservation Program (AAHPP), a joint program of MHT and MCAAHC, which provide substantial financial support to historic preservation and cultural heritage efforts throughout the state. MHT's participation in the Adaptation and Resiliency Working Group of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change and the Smart Growth Coordinating Committee of the Smart Growth Subcabinet allows Heritage 2031 to be integrated into those interagency efforts as well. Where appropriate, these programs and entities are referenced in the plan's strategies.

[highlight box: state and regional plans that intersect with Heritage2031]

Planning Timeline

- Dec 2022-March 2023: internal meetings, background reading to prepare for plan launch
- Feb-March 2023: create plan web page, hold key partner meetings
- March-Sept 2023: develop and distribute targeted and general surveys
 - General public survey: pushed out through social media, email distribution, public meetings, Maryland Association of Counties conference

- Archaeology survey: distributed via Discovering Archaeology Day, Council for Maryland Archaeology, Maryland Advisory Committee on Archaeology, Archeological Society of Maryland, people who have self-selected for archaeological distribution list
- Student survey: developed with UMD graduate student Elizabeth Mekonnen, outreach to preservation-related disciplines at the University of Maryland, Goucher College, Morgan State University, University of Maryland Baltimore County
- <u>Cultural and Historical Institutions survey</u>: developed and circulated in partnership with MMA and the MCHC
- Maryland Department of Planning Regional Planners survey: combined with meeting to solicit feedback on overall planning issues by region related to preservation
- March-Nov 2023: 10 one-on-one stakeholder interviews, including
 - Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture
 - Maryland Department of Natural Resources
 - Maryland Department of Transportation
 - Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
- May-October 2023: virtual focus groups by topic
 - Preservation Planners (with MAHDC)
 - Culture, Climate and Resiliency
 - Documenting Underrepresented Communities (with NPS Chesapeake Office and Maryland Humanities)
 - Archaeologists (with ASM)
 - Architects and Developers Roundtable (with Ann Powell, PlanB and Vice Chair, PM)
 - MIHP/National Register Priorities and Issues
 - Museums and Cultural Institutions (with MMA and MCHC): two focus groups held
 - AAHPP Priorities (with MCAAHC): two focus groups held
- July-August 2023: public regional meetings
 - Hagerstown African American Heritage Meeting (with MCAAHC)
 - Hagerstown General Public Meeting
 - Havre de Grace General Public Meeting
 - Owings General Public Meeting
 - o Baltimore City Public Meeting
 - Frederick Public Meeting
 - Virtual Preservation Town Hall
 - Cambridge General Public Meeting
 - Columbia African American Heritage Meeting (with MCAAHC)
- August-Nov 2023: analysis
- Oct-Nov 2023: internal meetings, partner meetings to identify draft goals/objectives/strategies
- **November 2023:** draft plan posted for comment (30 days)
- January 2024: final plan produced
- March 2024: final plan approved by MHT Board, National Park Service

Public Outreach: Summary of Feedback and Issues Raised

Through surveys, public meetings, and focus groups, members of the public provided more than 2,200 comments for the 2024-2031 planning process. MHT staff individually coded and analyzed these comments to help identify broad themes and issues, presented below.

Changes from PreserveMaryland to Heritage2031

In one public meeting, a participant suggested that we could just continue to use the same set of goals from the *PreserveMaryland* plans (2014-2023), given how broad they are and that so much feedback could be categorized within those umbrellas. While the general observation is true, the nature and type of feedback we received indicated that circumstances were markedly different than in the previous planning processes. Many of *PreserveMaryland II*'s objectives had been accomplished or seen substantial progress [highlight box of key metrics]; however, many of the recommended actions to improve networking and collaboration were disrupted by the pandemic. Public meetings in 2023 showed a fragmented community, substantial staff turnover at the local and state levels, diminished volunteer capacity, and a lack of information about resources available. For these reasons, *Heritage2031* includes more information intended to help orient people to existing resources and networks, in addition to recommended strategies to address these needs.

Public participation also differed in significant ways – for example, fewer people participated in in-person meetings, but more people participated in surveys and virtual offerings. We also received less feedback about regional needs and challenges – likely due to these changes in modes of participation – than in the *PreserveMaryland* planning efforts. As a result, we did not have enough feedback to inform separate sets of regional objectives as in previous plans and have instead focused on statewide recommendations.

Importance of Preservation in Revitalization, Identity, and Quality of Life

Overwhelmingly, from the general public, we heard that historic preservation, archaeology, and cultural heritage play important and underappreciated roles in understanding Maryland communities and their histories. Participants in the general survey, for example, prioritized the most important benefit(s) of cultural heritage as "helps us connect with our history" and "helps us tell our story to future generations" [add percentages]. Related feedback included a widespread concern about the lack of history/related instruction in schools and a need for educational and interpretive programs to engage youth.

Notably, the focus on community identity and learning from the past seem to have often connected to current cultural concerns including racial justice, challenging and changing historical narratives, diversifying perspectives within history to include marginalized peoples, and an appreciation of the role that history plays in helping us interrogate the present. We believe this context offers an important opportunity for people involved in heritage preservation and interpretation to make meaningful contributions to these local,

state, and national conversations; indeed, many organizations and entities have already stepped up to do so. While we received a range of comments, overwhelmingly participants favored a focus on justice, equity, access, and inclusion to help Marylanders better understand their own histories and engage together for future progress.

Practitioners working within preservation and related fields were more likely to identify the importance of preservation and cultural heritage in economic revitalization and quality of life. They also shared a widespread concern about a lack of advocates for historic preservation (on the state and local levels), a lack of common messaging points, and insufficient data to persuade decision-makers about these benefits. Respondents of all types noted a widespread perceived loss of cultural resources due to development pressure and neglect, and several noted heritage tourism and interpretive programming, using place-based approaches, as important ways to meet both educational and economic revitalization goals.

Changing Practice and Needs of Historic Preservation

Through all avenues for public input, participants noted the high – and rising – costs of historic preservation, coupled with the challenges of finding appropriate tradespeople and contractors and (to a lesser extent) materials. Incentive programs can be difficult to access, and many participants noted that current federal, state, and local incentives are not sufficient to subsidize the cost of preservation relative to new construction. While participants widely understood the value and benefits of rehabilitating and restoring historic properties, property stewards and developers, in particular, voiced concerns about strict interpretations of the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* – the federal standards for what constitutes the appropriate treatment of historic properties – for local regulatory purposes and incentive programs at all levels. Several commented that historic preservation should help meet skyrocketing needs for affordable housing or, at the very least, not hinder efforts.

There is an ongoing concern about a lack of diversity among practitioners, along with calls – including from current students – for more engagement, including paid internships, for young people who may be interested in pursuing historic preservation and related fields professionally. Several participants flagged concerns about professional qualifications in the practice, which can severely impact who can participate in cultural heritage fields and carry out grant-funded activities. (NPS has indicated that the Secretary of the Interior's <u>Professional Qualifications Standards</u> are outdated and revisions are planned, but they remain the professional standards for historians, architectural historians, archaeologists, architects, and experts in historic architecture.)

As noted in previous plans, Maryland's cultural resources data can be outdated and has significant gaps, especially related to marginalized and underrepresented communities and more recent historic buildings. (Properties built in 1973 now meet the 50-year threshold for consideration as potentially "historic.") It is also expensive for individuals and local governments to participate in traditional architectural documentation programs, including the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, maintained by MHT,

and the National Register of Historic Places, maintained by the National Park Service. Participants expressed an urgent and ongoing need for state and local agencies to invest in data collection, make systems easier to use, and share data related to cultural resources. Without access to good data, it is difficult to make good planning decisions, and more historic and cultural sites will be lost. Many participants also expressed an interest in using different kinds of data – for example, oral histories – to capture the experiences and histories of marginalized and underrepresented communities. Some expressed a desire to document and protect places of cultural significance that do not meet the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places and noted that there is no easy way to do this, at least within traditional documentation and preservation programs.

In many ways, this feedback received during the planning process mirrors national conversations about historic preservation standards, policies, and programs. Many local historic preservation commissions allow greater flexibility in alterations than state and federal incentive programs; this can help meet local community needs but also creates confusion for developers and property owners. NPS has responded in part by recently issuing new guidance about the use of substitute materials on historic properties [see highlight]. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation plans to release new guidance on affordable housing and historic preservation, as well as climate adaptation (see Climate Change and Sustainability section below). Over the course of the last statewide preservation plan, both NPS and MHT have introduced online submissions for tax credit programs, and NPS has introduced electronic National Register submissions. Through the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Offices, MHT is participating in these conversations and we expect that policy changes will continue to be proposed and discussed within the timeframe of this plan; however, it is difficult to anticipate how far-reaching these proposals might be.

Historic Cemeteries

Throughout the planning process, participants voiced concerns about the lack of data and resources available to help preserve and protect Maryland's historic cemeteries. This issue also connects to historic preservation policies, in that cemeteries are typically not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, which can limit their protection and eligibility for incentives. They exist in a gray area between historic properties, archaeological sites, and cultural landscapes, despite being important places of cultural memory.

In 2022, MHT and MCAAHC collaborated on a <u>report</u> to the Chairmen of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and House Appropriations Committee of the Maryland General Assembly, which outlined the challenges facing Maryland's historic African American cemeteries and proposed recommendations. The issues outlined in the report, which overlapped heavily with feedback received during the planning process, included:

- lack of maintenance and missing grave markers
- missing and deteriorated burial records
- unknown or inaccurate cemetery boundaries and grave locations

- best practice guidance needed for locating unmarked cemeteries
- unknown or contested ownership
- cemetery locational data unknown or inaccessible
- statutory and regulatory weaknesses in cemetery protection
- desecration and disturbance are rarely prosecuted
- issues of public interest and engagement, including public access, lack of funding for interpretation and memorialization, and lack of education, training, and networking.

While African American cemeteries are among the most vulnerable of Maryland's historic cemeteries and need special attention, the issues and recommendations made in the report are applicable to all historic cemeteries. For these reasons, we have proposed that this plan's key objectives for cemeteries should be consistent with the 2022 report.

Urgent Need for Expanded Technical Assistance, Capacity Building, and Collaboration

As mentioned previously, many participants in the planning process indicated a breakdown of networks and connections through the pandemic and its aftermath. The need for networking, capacity building, and collaboration – which had been raised in previous statewide preservation plans – had only become exacerbated in the last few years. While staff turnover at some organizations provided fresh energy, it often came with a loss of institutional knowledge and established relationships. As a result, we received many requests for public and private sector partners to make more technical assistance, training, and networking opportunities available both locally and at the statewide level. Many participants expressed that they need help to understand the resources available, especially from different agencies and programs for funding and research related to cultural heritage.

In particular, participants noted that local advocacy nonprofits, which campaign to preserve historic places, seemed to have disappeared from the landscape, and those that remained did not know where to turn for support. In some cases, Maryland's heritage areas have developed the capacity to serve as regional umbrellas for various groups engaged in preservation, archaeology, and cultural heritage, but this service is uneven across the state. [highlight examples] Groups of practitioners – including the staff of museums and cultural institutions, local preservation planners, and lay advocates for preservation – expressed a desire for both regional and statewide information exchange, among peers. Participants requested a mix of virtual and inperson opportunities to support accessibility needs, as well as special support for all-volunteer organizations and organizations led by and serving Black, Indigenous, and marginalized communities.

Climate Change and Sustainability

In comparison to previous planning years, participants seemed much more attuned to concerns about climate change and its impacts on historic and cultural properties, especially participants working and living on the Eastern Shore. In particular,

participants raised concerns about cemeteries and archaeological sites, as well as vulnerable sites connected to Black and Indigenous communities that are imminently threatened by sea-level rise. Participants also noted that heritage-related events and educational programming, as well as the fundraising events needed to sustain organizations, are increasingly threatened by severe weather events.

This feedback dovetails with MHT's observation that requests from local governments have also increased over the last three to five years, asking for more assistance in hazard mitigation and climate adaptation, and we expect this to continue. Unfortunately, MHT no longer has funding to support dedicated assistance to local governments and partners on this issue. The Moore-Miller Administration has flagged climate change as an urgent priority to be addressed and has created new capacity at the state level to pursue the administration's aggressive climate goals. Over the next eight years, it is possible that more assistance may become available for communities grappling with cultural heritage and climate change.

[highlight: Maryland Adaptation Framework and implementation]

We heard a broad recognition of the value of historic preservation in sustainable development, particularly in fostering walkable communities, promoting investment in existing communities over sprawl, and keeping materials out of landfills. However, some participants voiced concerns about the ability of historic preservation to support the energy infrastructure needed to meet state and federal climate goals (for example, solar panel installation on homes, the development of large-scale renewable facilities on the landscape, and electric vehicle infrastructure). We anticipate that this conversation and approach will continue to evolve on the federal, state, and local levels, and MHT and its partners will need to track developments and help communicate best practices throughout the state.

[highlights: new flood guidance from NPS, Montgomery County sustainability and preservation goals, compliance agreements to streamline solar reviews]

Accessibility of Public and Private Programs

As in previous statewide preservation plans, participants challenged federal, state, and local programs to do everything possible to increase accessibility, especially to sources of funding for historic preservation, archaeology, and cultural heritage. They noted capacity limitations for many groups in even applying for funding and incentives, much less administration of the funds to state (and to a lesser extent, federal) standards. Several participants requested a quick turnaround to receive funds, once approved, and that state agencies be more open to making funds available upfront versus dispensing funding as reimbursements, both of which (slower processing and reimbursements) privilege higher-capacity organizations with more access to cash. In a few cases, participants noted that funding requirements to convey historic preservation easements remain a concern, despite positive policy changes since the last statewide plan. Participants identified the following gaps in public and private funding programs:

- Operational support
- Communications and marketing support
- More support for research and documentation, including but not limited to architectural documentation
- Increased and more flexible emergency funding
- Museums that are not in heritage areas
- Museum-specific needs, such as collections

MHT, its sister agencies, and partner nonprofits widely recognize the need to increase program accessibility, particularly to be responsive to the needs of underrepresented and marginalized communities. In practice, this will require new and substantial investment in outreach, personnel, systems for implementation (for example, staff liaisons to develop relationships, training in cultural competencies, new software and software training, dedicated staff to assist applicants who need more help). MHT has embarked on a Board-led Justice/Equity/Diversity/Inclusion effort to examine its own programs and impacts; other agencies and organizations have undertaken similar evaluations [add examples]. Some measures can and will be undertaken with existing resources; however, in many cases, additional investment will be necessary to respond to the needs identified. In other cases, existing regulations and policies exist that create barriers to access.

[highlight: achievements in streamlining and accessibility over *PreserveMaryland/PreserveMaryland II*]

Vision

To protect and share Maryland's diverse cultural heritage, fostering a sense of pride, awareness, belonging, and stewardship among our communities, while promoting:

- o economic vitality,
- o equity and accessibility,
- sustainability,
- o educational enrichment, and
- o climate resilience.



Heritage 2031 Goals and Objectives

[strategies will be included in the final plan]

Goal 1: Document, protect, and interpret community histories and places underrepresented in the historic record [reference toolkit]

- Objective: Document, protect, and share the histories and existing culture of Native American peoples in Maryland, in partnership with associated federally and state-recognized tribes and tribal communities.
- Objective: Explore and interpret post-Civil War African American stories in Maryland.
- Objective: Expand the documentation of Asian American immigration and settlement in Maryland.
- Objective: Continue to identify and document LGBTQ sites, building on the statewide historic context study.
- Objective: Expand the ability to document cultural landscapes and share this data for planning and interpretative purposes.
- Objective: Secure support for and begin to implement the recommendations in the June 2022 Historic African American Cemeteries report to the Joint Chairmen of the Maryland General Assembly by the MCAAHC and MHT.
- Objective: Invest in the documentation and commemoration of Sites of Conscience [add NPS definition]
- Objective: Work with government, nonprofit and community partners to address MIHP data gaps associated with underrepresented communities.
- Objective: Increase and stabilize funding for the research and documentation of historic and cultural properties, with a focus on underrepresented resources and communities.

[spread: 250th Commission – connect to goals 1 and 2]

Goal 2: Increase community engagement in historic preservation, archaeology, and cultural heritage and expand opportunities for professional/avocational training and information exchange

- Objective: Develop and communicate improved strategies for Native American participation in planning, development, research, and interpretive projects.
- Objective: Create regional networks of support for organizations and individuals with marginalized access to resources.
- Objective: Enhance educational opportunities for the public, particularly youth, to learn about the practice of historic preservation and archaeology.
- Objective: Increase outreach to the public about existing programs and resources for historic preservation, archaeology, and cultural heritage protection.
- Objective: Produce new and improved opportunities for professional training and support in historic preservation, archaeology, and cultural heritage protection.
- Objective: Create peer-to-peer networking opportunities for museums and cultural sites.
- Objective: Continue to expand access to training opportunities in historic preservation trades and building arts. [highlight apprenticeship program]
- Objective: Collaborate with Maryland universities to increase capacity for historic preservation planning and cultural heritage research and protection.

Goal 3: Integrate historic preservation and archaeology into climate adaptation, local planning, and economic development

- Objective: Invest in climate resilience and adaptation efforts in historic communities.
- Objective: Prioritize the documentation of Mid-Century resources to support local planning efforts, redevelopment, and compliance review.
- Objective: Improve data sharing among state agencies and with local planners.

[illustration: climate impacts]

[maps: CLGs, Main Streets, HPCs, Heritage Areas]

• Objective: Improve the capacity of local governments to engage in planning for cultural resources.

- Objective: Develop and share guidance to help meet energy efficiency and preservation goals at the state and local level.
- Objective: Enhance the ability of historic preservation to support housing redevelopment and affordable housing needs.
- Objective: Maximize the ability of the Historic Revitalization Tax Credit Program to leverage investment and redevelopment in communities.
- Objective: Connect Marylanders to historically and culturally significant waterways for educational and recreational opportunities.
- Objective: Foster the appropriate treatment (documentation, preservation, rehabilitation, redevelopment, and interpretation) of state-owned historic properties and cultural resources.
- Objective: Build collaborative relationships with and conduct outreach to state and federal agencies involved in Section 106 review.

Goal 4: Improve efficiency and accessibility of programs that support historic preservation, archaeology, and cultural heritage protection

- Objective: Continue to analyze the impacts of state programs and make improvements to maximize equitable benefits.
- Objective: Update the Maryland Heritage Areas Program Strategic Plan.
- Objective: Identify existing communities that could benefit from Maryland Heritage Areas and Historic Revitalization Tax Credit programs – but have not done so in the past - and work proactively with partners to improve access to funding and other resources.
- Objective: Provide new financial and technical support for museums and cultural sites.
- Objective: Improve user experience through online portals.
- Objective: Increase access to qualified historic preservation contractors and tradespeople.
- Objective: Increase access to documentation and archives held by the state.

Goal 5: Make the case for preservation

- Objective: Continue to expand social media outreach about historic preservation, archaeology, and cultural heritage successes and opportunities.
- Objective: Develop case studies for use by local advocates, developers, governments, and decision-makers.
- Objective: Increase the capacity of local organizations to protect and advocate for historic properties.
- Objective: Invest in economic impact studies to demonstrate the value of historic preservation and cultural heritage.

